2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

slowly pulled his fist apart to suggest a slow stretching process, saying, "Stretch out, stretch out, stretch out." Then, in a sweeping motion, he tightened his fist and with one violent jerk emphasized the king snake's ultimate quick, spasmodic motion.

Mr. Mickell is a great talker. The speech samples I obtained from him ranged from childhood experiences to tales of the bizarre. He is a good singer and participates in the shouts with enthusiasm. But the outstanding feature in his repertoire is a collection of dozens and dozens of riddles. Riddling is a pastime activity common among the older Sea Island men and women. In fact, Mr. Mickell and one of his close friends often sat for hours telling riddles until one or the other ran out of riddles to tell.

Without a doubt, *Aneatha Brisbane, Miss Myma,* is my closest link to the Sea Island communities. She was born in a shanty, still standing on Wadmalaw Island, and never really ventured far from the site on which it now stands. Her mother lived in the shanty before Miss Myma was born, and when she died, Miss Myma continued to live there until she purchased a one-bedroom trailer some fifteen or twenty years ago. The trailer was a weather-beaten shell of a home consisting of a living room, a kitchen, and a bedroom. It had no running water, no electricity, and no toilet, though it was equipped with appropriate connections. I soon understood that while these things are primary for survival for most Americans, to stay on the Sea Islands I had to be ready to live without them. I learned to adjust my eyes to the kerosene lamp that Miss Myma lit so that I could read after nightfall. I learned to make sure that we got wood in to burn in the potbellied wood stove to warm the house in the cool mornings. I learned that if I filled a number-three tub with water from a neighbor's well in the morning and set it in the hot island sun all day, the water would be just the right temperature for a refreshing bath in the evening.

Miss Myma is a very sophisticated-looking woman, with high cheek bones, reddish brown skin that she says she acquired from the Wadmalaw Indians, and the most beautiful white hair I ever saw. She is naturally friendly, smokes a pipe, and is said to have been very lively in her younger days. She is soft-spoken and generally restrained in her language (though I have heard some of her women friends use words which would make the vulgarest of men shrink in shame). Her manner can be deceiving, however. I observed her once in an argument with

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 62]

Structure and Content of Household Units

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342 The traditional family household is situated in a large gap. Three, five or more units may have been built in this gap. This would be the home of one family. These units may be either individual and/or units with multiple extensions. The general patterns of these units is circular to semi-circular. The units themselves are wood structures built in a block "A" fashion. This structure is pilloved off the ground some twenty-two inches. These units built in the fifties to early sixties were but cinder block models of this basic structure. Out at an extreme point of the semi-
[343] circle sits a half blocked "A" structure, the "outhouse."
[514] More, inside plumbing units are being added on to houses, but the outhouse is commonly seen. Inside these older units
354 some families have both gas and stove cooking options.
362 Exclusive use of the pot belly stove may be the dominant habits in some sectors. Only use of gas stoves would be the more probable behavior of James Island residents. This is likely because wood is not as available. On James Island
362 there is less wooded acreage, but newer and more expensive units. The floor space in many of these older and more commonly seen dwellings is some nine feet wide by thirty. odd feet long. This space tends to be divided into living room, kitchen and one or two bedrooms. These units contain the minimum of old furniture and a heater.